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Henry Cabot Lodge, U.N. and Saigon Envoy, Dies

By ERIC PACE

Henry Cabot Lodge, the articulate Massachusetts Republican who was United States delegate to the United Nations, Ambassador to South Vietnam and a three-term Senator, died yesterday at his home in Beverly, Mass., after a long illness. He was 82 years old.

At the United Nations from 1953 to 1960, Mr. Lodge, an energetic debater, engaged in ticklish diplomacy, helping bring the Soviet Union into negotiations on the peaceful use of outer space and making behind-the-scenes efforts that helped bring about a cease-fire during the 1956 British, French and Israeli invasion of Egypt.

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Noting that he had been reported to have — in the words of an article by a Times reporter accompanying the published Pentagon Papers — “authorized C.I.A. participation in tactical planning of the coup,” Mr. Lodge said he had been “specifically ordered by” by President Kennedy “not to help in the planning.” He added, “I scrupulously obeyed orders.”

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Appointed to Saigon Post

In June 1963, President Kennedy named him Ambassador to South Vietnam. The appointment was a deft political move, some analysts have said. William Safire, the New York Times

columnist, wrote in 1977 that the appointment “foreclosed ‘mainstream’ Republican opposition to the way the war was conducted until 1967.”

Mr. Lodge arrived in Saigon in August 1963, holding the view, he wrote later, “that the people of South Vietnam had a right to exist independently of North Vietnam and that South Vietnamese rights were being threatened by aggression from North Vietnam.”

‘A Coup Will Be Needed’

“I thought from the beginning,” he went on in his 1973 book, “that an exclusively military solution to the Vietnam problem was impossible,” and “I eventually reached the conclusion that we should withdraw our troops from Vietnam as fast as this could be done in an orderly way and try to negotiate a settlement.”

But in 1963, with the United States military presence in South Vietnam still relatively small, Mr. Lodge was largely concerned with the prospects of President Diem’s Government.

On Aug. 28, 1963, Mr. Lodge wrote later, the State Department informed him that President Diem’s brother,

had been “specifically ordered by” by President Kennedy “not to help in the planning.” He added, “I scrupulously obeyed orders.”

While he was still in Vietnam and without campaigning, he won the 1964 New Hampshire Republican Presidential primary on a write-in vote, defeating the eventual Republican nominee, Barry Goldwater. In June 1964, Mr. Lodge resigned the ambassadorship, largely, he wrote in the 1973 book, because his wife, the former Emily Sears, whom he had married in 1926, had not been well.

At President Johnson’s request, Mr. Lodge embarked on his second tour as Ambassador in Saigon in 1965; it was in the following year that Mr. Lodge came to hope, through an undertaking code-named “Project Marigold,” to end the conflict in Vietnam, which by then included the United States bombing of North Vietnam.

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Ngo Dinh Nhu, a key figure in the Government, as Mr. Lodge put it, “must go,” and that, in the State Department’s words, a “coup will be needed.”

On Aug. 30, Mr. Lodge wrote, this telegram and an earlier, similar one were “canceled” from Washington — which, he contended, “removed the basis for the charge” that came later from various quarters that, as the Pentagon Papers put it, the United States had “variously authorized, sanctioned and encouraged” the Nov. 1 coup, led by South Vietnamese generals who overthrew President Diem along and his brother. Both were killed.

“Our policy, under instructions from President Kennedy,” Mr. Lodge wrote, was merely “not to thwart” a coup, and he observed that “to this day we do not know whether the murder” of President Diem “was an act of private revenge or arranged by the coup plotters.”

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